

John C. Ackerman

Tazewell County Board

Continuing a Family Tradition of Community Service

November 24th, 2010

***** Press Release *****

Where the Real Credit for the Rail Splitter Wind Farm Lies

The other day I was watching a great local show, "At Issue" on WTVP. A section of the show addressed the success of the Rail Splitter Wind Farm in Southern Tazewell and Northern Logan Counties. An individual taking credit for this success was Tazewell County Board Chairman David Zimmerman. This is interesting since he is not the reason we have this success. Zimmerman was not present when the vote was taken and thusly did not actually support the project.

The Tazewell County Board had a major vote concerning this issue in July of 2008. It was very controversial at the time since the Tazewell County State's Attorney Stewart Umholtz opposed the Wind Farm. Umholtz said at the time that legal action against the county would be the next step. "The issue will get before an Illinois court," Umholtz said after the 12-4 vote. As a foot note, you will recall that legal action never happened. But at the time, this was a lot of pressure for many of the County Board Members. For some, that pressure ended with the decision not to attend the meeting and thus not have to make a decision on the vote. Some call this good political positioning; others call this not doing your job.

For one of the most controversial votes in Tazewell County in the past decade, Zimmerman chose not to show up. However, I feel it is important to recognize the County Board Members that did make this development possible. These members not only spoke in support of the project, but at the most critical point in time placed their votes in support of the project. It is one thing to say you support a project; it is another to actually place the vote in support of the project.

Member Mel Stanford made the Motion to approve the development with a Second by Member Greg Sinn. Members Joyce Antonini, Joe Berardi, James Carius, Monica Connett, Terry Hillegonds, Ken Klopfenstein, Tim Neuhauser, Rosemary Palmer, Jerry Vanderheydt and Terry VonBoeckman joined Members Stanford and Sinn in support. I was not a County Board Member at the time, but as a citizen did everything I could to see this project go forward including a Letter to the Editor in support of the project and phone calls to our elected County Officials.

Votes are important. And it is also important that we review and remember votes that are given (and in this case not given) by our elected officials.

As always, I consider it an honor and a privilege to serve you on the Tazewell County Board and if I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

John C. Ackerman
(309) 635-7624
www.JohnCAckerman.com